

# POL3085: Quantitative Analysis in Political Science

Lecture: TTh 3:15-4:30 in Anderson 250  
Section 1: T 4:45-6:00 in Blegen 440  
Section 2: Th 4:45-6:00 in Blegen 440

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## Course Overview

**Course description** Did you ever wonder whether or not a particular claim is true? Alternatively, did you ever get into an intellectual debate and wanted to back up your argument with evidence? This course will teach you how to use data to evaluate claims and produce sound evidence. It will equip you with quantitative research tools which you can use to test theories and arguments with real data. You will learn how to properly design research and how to formulate viable hypotheses. Using applications in Political Science, you will acquire basic statistical techniques to test these hypotheses. After this course, you will be able to use statistical software to analyze real data in order to test a hypothesis that you might be interested in. In the process of doing so, this course will assist you in sharpening your critical thinking skills and provide opportunities to train causal interpretation. This class will therefore provide you with valuable tools applicable in many workplace settings.

**Course Goals** Since the many of the claims we encounter in media or academic debates are highly contested, we need to learn how to evaluate competing claims. One particularly effective way to do so is through statistical analysis. This course offers the opportunity to sharpen your quantitative skills with this purpose in mind. After completing the course, you will be able to critically evaluate claims as well as and formulate causal relationships.

Besides these underlying learning objectives, this course offers sets out to enable you to acquire two skills that are fundamental for many jobs after graduation. First, you will learn how to conduct quantitative analyses of real data to evaluate competing claims. Imagine you are in a board meeting and your colleagues put forward two distinct proposals, and you can come in stating that based on your quantitative analysis the company should pursue the one but not the other. This course will teach you the software and the commands to do quantitative research yourself.

Second, if you still have semesters left until you graduate or are thinking about pursuing an academic career, this course will improve your ability to understand and evaluate published academic research. More fundamentally, you will be more capable of critically consuming information, especially news media reports in politics, economics, the sciences, and a wide variety of other area.

**Teaching Methods** Considering the contested nature of the topic, this course offers an opportunity to prepare for a career in settings where there are no clear-cut answers, such as consulting, finance and law. However, in these jobs you will need more than the software skills described in the course goals. You will also need skills that are applicable in these work environments, such as teamwork, argumentation, writing and independent project management.

I will use teaching methods that will require you to develop such workplace-related skills. For example, the class will be divided in teams that will work together for the entire semester. During class time I will

frequently pose questions and give small in-class assignments that will need to be solved by the teams in order to facilitate your ability to work in a team. Further, I will require individual students to produce written output, which may be in the form of memos, reflective papers or research papers. These assignments will convey basic writing and argumentation skills, which you will need at your workplace later on. Lastly, the major assignments will be projects that expose you to the real world. You will be responsible for developing a plan for how to solve the task set to your team, implementing your strategy, and creating a product that embodies what you have learned. For example, you might be asked to interview business managers or consumer representatives in order to find an answer to a particular problem. In this case, you will first have to identify the persons you want to interview, then conduct the interviews, and finally synthesize the responses from the interviewees in a theoretically informed way. Such assignments are intended to provide you with an opportunity to exercise project management. I subscribe to these teaching methods not only from a workplace-requirement point of view, but also from a pedagogical perspective. Scientific research shows that student learning is enhanced by providing active learning opportunities. In other words, you will learn more if I engage you with tasks than if I would simply lecture to you.

**Course prerequisites** There are no specific course prerequisites. This course is open to anyone who is intrigued by the questions posed above. However, this is an advanced undergraduate course. There is no mathematical prerequisite beyond high school algebra but it assumes that students have had at least two years of political science training.

### Course readings

**Required Readings** There are three required texts for the course, which are available at the bookstore.

- Pollock, Philip H. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 4th edition. Washington: Sage/CQ Press.
- Pollock, Philip H. 2010. *A SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*. 2nd edition. Washington: Sage/CQ Press.
- Jaisingh, Lloyd. *Statistics for the Utterly Confused*. 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill.

You may be able to find cheaper versions online. However, make sure you purchase the correct editions. Be sure that you have the Stata companion (there is also one available for another statistical program, SPSS).

Also, if you buy a used copy of the workbook, be sure that the data CD is included and that the workbook has all of the pages, as you will be turning some of them in as homework assignments.

**Recommended Readings** In some cases, students are particularly interested in the topic of the course. If you want to read more about the topic, I recommend the following books (for references see the bibliography at the end of this document):

- Kohler and Kreuter (2005)
- Acock (2008)

**Software** You will learn how to use the statistical software STATA in the sections. The sections meet in computer labs. Most section sessions will involve hands-on demonstrations on how to use the software for each newly covered topic in lecture. Section will also involve some small group discussion, as well as review of recently returned assignments.

You can buy the software at <http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/> in order to install it on your computer. A six-month license is available between \$30 and \$40. Alternatively, STATA is available in multiple computer labs on campus, including Coffman Union B060, Hubert H. Humphrey Center 50, and Walter Library 103. Visit <http://www.oit.umn.edu/computer-labs/> for more locations and hours.

**Required Equipment** Classes will be heavily interactive. I encourage you to bring your laptop as well as a mobile device that supports twitter.

### Assessment of student performance

**Types of assignments in this course** This course will use several types of assignments to assess your learning. In particular, the assignments fall into five broad groups which will be discussed below:

- General course requirements: Because active dialogue is central to the learning process, students are required to participate in group work, activities, and discussions in class. Participation also helps me guide the course most effectively, and focus on those things which are most important for your learning.

In particular, many learning activities will involve the permanent teams of about 5 classmates which will be formed at the beginning of the semester. In order to facilitate the team working well together, each team will reach a "memorandum of understanding" during the first week that defines how the group members expect all members to behave. Later in the semester, you will have the opportunity to assess the behavior of your teammates and evaluate how much and how well they have contributed to the work of your team. These assessments of your performance as judged by your teammates will be part of your overall performance evaluation.

- Reading Assessment Tests (RATs) and In-class Assignments: RATs are small quizzes at the beginning of class testing understanding of the readings. In addition, there will be some in-class assignments that you will be asked to complete. Both the RATs and in-class assignments will be designed to help you prepare for exams and ensure that you understand the material that is covered in class and in the readings.
- Homework Assignments: Since much of the material in the course builds on itself, there will be regular assignments to help ensure that everyone is up to speed on the material. These assignments will include a combination of textbook problems that you will do by hand, questions that require you to use SPSS, as well as tasks that will aid you in the completion of your final project. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned due date. If you turn your assignment in after the beginning of the class it will be considered one day late. I must receive a hard copy of your homework at the beginning of class. In other words, no e-mail submissions. Note: I tried to schedule due dates in such a way to maximize your opportunity to find lab time if necessary. Please plan ahead accordingly.
- Final research project: You will carry out your own empirical research project on a topic of your choice, using quantitative data that you analyze in STATA. Portions of the project will be done in the homework assignments, culminating in a 10 - 12 page final paper. Details will be provided in a separate handout.
- Midterm Exam: The midterm will primarily contain calculation problems, short answer questions, and short essays but no STATA problems. Thus, only a calculator will be necessary.
- Final Exam: The final exam will be taken during the final exam period, as scheduled by the University. Everyone must take the final exam during the scheduled time period. There will be no exceptions. The final exam will primarily contain calculation problems, short answer questions, and short essays. A calculator will be necessary.

- Class and Section Participation: Your participation grade will be based on involvement in class discussion, attendance, and in-class group work. Although I encourage you to ask questions regularly and engage with me during class, your participation grade is not simply a tally of how many times you speak in class. Instead, I am more interested in students providing their peers with thoughtful feedback when I ask you to discuss your research projects in groups, or to work with each other to complete the occasional in-class group activity. When we have in-class exercises I will sometimes ask you to turn in a brief written assignment as evidence of your work, which I will count towards your participation grade. These assignments are one of the readings for the week.
- Learning Portfolio: The Learning Portfolio is due at the end of the semester. It will require the submission of all the work that you have produced throughout the semester (i.e. papers, projects, etc.), along with a last assignment that will ask you to reflect on the progress you have made throughout this class. The Learning Portfolio therefore offers an opportunity to reflect on your progress and how you will be able to use the skills acquired in the course in future settings.

**Grading** *Grading criteria* are the different types of measuring tapes I will use to assess your work. For example, essay answers on exams will be evaluated based on the clarity of your presentation, the strength of your argument, and how well you use your knowledge of the course material to substantiate your claims. In other words, it is about your analytic abilities to come up with an answer that matters, rather than memorization of theories and facts. In contrast, research papers will be assessed with a more exhaustive list of criteria. These include the clarity and originality of the research question, analytical development of the argument, quality of the hypothesis, the merit of the evidence provided, and the prowess of presentation.

In contrast to grading criteria, *grading standards* are the thresholds of the criteria (i.e. the measuring tapes) that define the difference between, say, an A and a B. In order to determine who deserves what grade, I will curve and therefore evaluate the relative quality of work produced. I believe that this is a more adequate way of measuring performance than grading against a set standard, as I do not want to restrict students by requiring you to solve a problem in one particular way. Rather, since there are many ways to solve a given problem, I like to encourage you to find your own solutions. Since the solutions will be substantively different from each other comparing the relative quality of the solutions proposed is the most appropriate way to grade. However, I would like to point out that the two positions (grading on a curve vs. against a standard) might not be as contradictory as one might think: Teachers who grade on the curve are influenced in setting their cutoff points between grades by their feelings about whether the class was a good or a poor one. Similarly, teachers who do not grade on the curve set their standards in line with what previous experiences lead them to regard as a reasonable accomplishment.

**Final course grade calculation** In sum, the assessment of your learning will be based on both your individual performance and quality of your group's output. The individual components will be weighted in the following manner:

- RATs and In-class Assignments: 20%
- Homework Assignments: 20%
- Final research project: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 10%
- Final Exam: 10%
- Class and Section Participation: 10%
- Learning Portfolio: 10%

Note: Please consider the course policies on late work, missed exams, and grade disputes at the end of this document.

## Expectations

### What I expect of my students

- Willingness to work: According to the Senate Student Academic workload policy "one credit represents, for the average University undergraduate student, three hours of academic work per week (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, study, and so on), averaged over the semester, in order to complete the work of the course to achieve an average grade" (source: <http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/Studentwork.html>). In other words, you will need to invest time into this course, otherwise the benefits and the grades you will get might not be what you want.
- Classroom etiquette: You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to the class session for which they are scheduled. Lectures and discussions will not duplicate, but instead will build on, and hence will assume prior familiarity with, assigned readings. Your active, informed and civil participation in discussion and class activities is expected. You are responsible for remaining attentive in class, arriving prepared to discuss course materials, and respecting other members of the class as you and they participate.
- Obligations to other students: You will be assigned to a team of about 7 students that will work together the entire semester. Each team will have the opportunity to agree on how the teamwork should happen. You are expected to work with your teammates in the manner that all team members agreed upon.
- Course policies: Please read the course policies that are stated at the end of this syllabus. They are important in several ways. First, they facilitate a learning experience that is as efficient and effective as possible. Further, they represent the professional code of conduct in the real world. Therefore, familiarizing yourself with them will prepare you for your later work careers.

### What you can expect from the instructor

- I offer a learning environment that challenges you in order to provide opportunities for growth. I will be prepared to the best of my abilities.
- I encourage you to explore your own ideas in response to the assigned tasks. I will be open-minded in responding to your ideas and suggestions. I will offer constructive feedback.
- I am open to constructive feedback from you on my performance. If you have ideas or suggestions, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me. I am committed to make this the best possible classroom experience.

## Course Schedule

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### INTRODUCTION

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#### **Week 1/Class 1: Introduction**

Guiding question: Description of goals

- Motivation: Why to take this course?
- Teaching methods: Why will I teach it the way I teach it?
- Forming groups.
- Clarifying requirements.

Readings: none

Assessments: none

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### SECTION 1: BUILDING BLOCS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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#### **Week 2/Class 1: The research process**

Guiding question: What are the steps to be taken to arrive at valid conclusions?

Readings: none.

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

#### **Week 2/Class 2: Defining Concepts**

Guiding question: How to conceptualize what we are interested in?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.1)
- Bachman and O'Malley (1981)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

### WEEK 2/LAB: INTRODUCTION TO THE SOFTWARE

Agenda: Familiarization with the software, reading data into the software.

Readings: none

#### **Week 3/Class 1: Operationalization of variables**

Guiding question: How to measure concepts?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.1,2 pp. 26-30)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)
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## SECTION 2: DESCRIBING WHAT IS GOING ON

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### **Week 3/Class 2: Summarizing variables 1**

Guiding question: How to measure the central tendency of a variable?

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.1,2)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.2 pp. 30-41)

Assessments:

- Homework 1 due.

### WEEK 3/LAB: MEASUREMENT

Agenda: How to conceptualize “Democracy”. Finding and importing data from external sources.

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.1,2)
- Pollock (2010, Ch.1)

### **Week 4/Class 1: Summarizing variables 2**

Guiding question: How to measure dispersion around a mean?

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.3,4)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.2 pp. 30-41)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)
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## SECTION 3: EXPLAINING WHY SOMETHING IS GOING ON

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### **Week 4/Class 2: Explanations and hypotheses**

Guiding question: How to describe relationships between variables?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.2 pp. 44-54)

Assessments:

- Homework 2 due.

#### WEEK 4/LAB: SUMMARIZING VARIABLES

Agenda: Obtaining and presenting the information contained in a variable.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.2)

#### **Week 5/Class 1: Cross-Tab**

Guiding question: Is there a difference observable across difference groups?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.2 pp. 54-67)
- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.6)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

#### **Week 5/Class 2: Covariance and Correlation**

Guiding question: How to examine the strength of an association?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.2 pp. 54-67)
- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.6)

Assessments:

- Homework 3 due.

#### WEEK 5/LAB: TRANSFORMING DATA

Agenda: Recoding variables in accordance with our theory.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.3)

#### **Week 6/Class 1: Regression**

Guiding question: How to assess the causal impact of one variable on another?

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.5)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

#### **Week 6/Class 2: Controlled comparisons**

Guiding question: How to rule out alternative explanations?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.4)
- Jordan and Sanchez (1994)

Assessments:

- Homework 4 due.

#### WEEK 6/LAB: MAKING COMPARISONS

Agenda: Cross-Tabs and graphical representation of differences.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.4)

#### **Week 7/Class 1: The concept of Dummies and Interactions**

Guiding question: How to account for intervening relationships?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.4 pp.79-91, Ch.5)

Assessments:

- Research Paper Assignment 1 due.

#### **Week 7/Class 2: The application of Dummies and Interactions**

Guiding question: How to interpret the strength of relationships?

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.4 pp.79-91, Ch.5)

Assessments:

- Homework 5 due.

#### WEEK 7/LAB: GROUP PROJECT ON COMPARISONS

Agenda: Group work on a problem set.

Readings: none.

#### **Week 8/Class 1: Review**

#### **Week 8/Class 2: Midterm exam**

#### WEEK 8/LAB: CONTROLLED COMPARISONS

Agenda: Cross-tabs and graphical representation of differences while controlling for alternative explanations.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.5)

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SECTION 4: DETERMINING HOW CERTAIN WE ARE THAT SOMETHING IS REALLY GOING ON

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**Week 9/Class 1: Motivation for Probability Theory**

Guiding question: Are differences across groups coincidental or systematic?

Readings:

- none

Assessments:

- Homework 6 due.

**Week 9/Class 2: Probability Basics**

Guiding question: Why do we need to know probability theory?

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.7)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

**WEEK 9/LAB: PROBABILITY**

Agenda: Group work on probability questions.

Readings: none.

**Week 10/Class 1: Discrete Random Variables**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.8)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

**Week 10/Class 2: Continuous Random Variables**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.9)

Assessments:

- Homework 7 due.

#### WEEK 10/LAB: HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PAPER

Agenda: Literature review, citing sources, presenting results.

Readings: none.

#### Week 11/Class 1: Sampling Distributions

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.10,11)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.6 pp. 113-130)

Assessments:

- Homework 8 due.

#### Week 11/Class 2: Central Limit Theorem and Confidence Intervals

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.10,11)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.6)

Assessments:

- Research Paper Assignment 2 due.

#### WEEK 11/LAB: REGRESSION 1

Agenda: Introduction to regressions and their interpretation.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.8,10)

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#### SECTION 5: TESTING WHETHER SOMETHING IS REALLY GOING ON

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#### Week 12/Class 1: Hypothesis Tests 1

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.12,13)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.6 pp. 130-142)
- Pollock (2010, Ch.6)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

## **Week 12/Class 2: Chi-Square Tests**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.7 pp. 154-159)
- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.14)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

## **WEEK 12/LAB: REGRESSION 2**

Agenda: Confidence intervals, Hypothesis Tests

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.6)

## **Week 13/Class 1: Measures of Association**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.7 pp. 159-167)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

## **Week 13/Class 2: Hypothesis Tests 2**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.12,13)
- Pollock (2012, Ch.7 pp. 145-154)

Assessments:

- Homework 9 due.

## **WEEK 13/LAB: REGRESSION 3**

Agenda: Chi-Square tests, Measures of Association

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.7)

## **Week 14/Class 1: Analysis of Variance**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Jaisingh (2006, Ch.15)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

### **Week 14/Class 2: Multiple Regression**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.8 pp. 170-189)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

### **WEEK 14/LAB: REGRESSION 4**

Agenda: ANOVA.

Readings:

- Pollock (2010, Ch.7)

### **Week 15/Class 1: Dummies and Interactions, again**

Guiding question:

Readings:

- Pollock (2012, Ch.8 pp. 189-193)

Assessments:

- Readiness Assurance Test (RAT)

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### **RESUME**

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### **Week 15/Class 2: Resume**

Goals:

- Summary of what we have learned
- Review of skills learned and how to apply them in the “real world”.

Readings: none

Assessments:

- Learning Portfolio due

– Research Paper due

WEEK 15/LAB: REGRESSION 5

Agenda: Dummies and Interactions.

Readings:

– Pollock (2010, Ch.8,10)

**Week 16: Final exam**

## Course Policies

**Attendance, Participation, and Lecture Notes** Regular attendance is essential to your success in this course. Since I will be using interactive elements and group exercises during class time, it is difficult to "make up" for missed classes.

This is also the reason for not making my lecture notes and slides available to students. Research shows that students learn more if they have to make knowledge accessible to them through activities such as re-stating information in their own words, instead of simply being exposed to information. Writing your own lecture notes is therefore just as essential as your active participation in the classroom. Therefore, please make every attempt to attend classes. If you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements with one of your classmates to share notes. Considering that you will have permanent team members this should be easily possible.

We are jointly responsible for maintaining a constructive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to me or to other students will be asked to refrain from such behavior or, in severe cases, to leave the classroom. Mutual respect is expected of everyone in the classroom, and personal attacks will not be tolerated. Please contact me if you have any concerns in this regard.

### Late work and missed exams

- Late papers, projects, homework, and other assignments: With regard to papers, projects and other out-of-class assignments, my late-policy is two-fold. First, due dates are due dates. Late work will be subjected to a penalty in the form of points deducted. This deduction will increase exponentially with lateness. More specifically, I will deduct 20% of the points achieved for 12 hours delay, 50% for 24 hours, and 100% for more than 48 hours. The reason is that these out-of-class assignments usually run over several weeks. This policy is justified by the advance notice given, and the fact that your future boss will not be impressed if you cannot finish work assignments on time. Please note that it is always possible to hand in an assignment early.
- Missed exams: Generally, make-up exams will not be permitted. However, you are allowed to drop the lowest grade on one of your exams (i.e. either one of the midterm or the final exam) with no questions asked. However, you may also take all exams and drop the one with the lowest grade achieved, or miss one exam and drop the grade for that missed exam. It is entirely your choice.

I expect that this policy will reduce the need to come up with excuses for missed exams. However, if you are missing more than one exam, make up exams will not be permitted. The only exception is if you have an excused absence. This requires that you notify me before the assignment is administered. Coming to me several days after the test with a doctors note is not grounds to let you complete your missed exam. Further, I expect you to present written documentation of the circumstances (e.g. a note from the University Health Service verifying illness). I will accept the following as legitimate circumstances justifying lateness or taking a makeup exam: religious holidays, verifiable illness, serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and participation in group activities sponsored by the University. However, in all cases, you must speak to me directly, and not via email.

Further, please note that if you arrive late to an exam you will not be given extra time to complete it. You will have to finish by end of the examination period.

If you have a serious problem affecting your studies (e.g. a major illness, family problems, or a death in the family) you must speak to me personally, not via email, about any adjustments needed to complete the course. Telling me after the course has ended that your work suffered because your mother died mid-term leaves me with no options to help you. Do come and speak with me in such a situation as soon as possible. Serious illness/personal bereavement can be grounds for getting

formal extensions. However, such arrangements can not be made after a final grade has been allotted to you.

- Missed RAT: Generally, make-up RATs will not be permitted. However, you are allowed to drop the lowest grade on one of your RATs with no questions asked. Again, it is your choice whether to take all RATs and drop the lowest grade, or to miss one.
- Incomplete coursework: Incompletes will be granted only in the case of documented long-term illness, and if you and I jointly complete the CLA Agreement for Completion of Incomplete Work, which is available here: [cscl.umn.edu/assets/pdf/incompleteContract.pdf](http://cscl.umn.edu/assets/pdf/incompleteContract.pdf)
- Extra credit: Extra credit activities or coursework resubmission will not be permitted. Make your best effort the first time round. This habit will serve you well in whatever job you will be working later in life.

**Grade disputes** It is understandable that, at times, you have questions or concerns with regard to a grade you received on one of your assignments or exams. However, in order to turn questions about your grade into a learning experience, your grade dispute will be received in the following way:

1. Cooling off period: I will not consider any grade related inquiries for 48 hours after the grades have been handed out. This Cooling off period provides the opportunity to let the initial emotions subside and think more clearly about the issue at hand.
2. Written argument: Write a note explaining why you believe that your answer is correct, and why you therefore should have received full points. It is expected that you address the comments that the grader has given you. Email this note to me at least 24 hours prior to meeting me during my office hours. Bring your exam with you to the office hours. This step serves the purpose of encouraging you to critically re-evaluate the answer you gave on the exam. Looking through your notes and developing a case for your answer is an additional learning opportunity.
3. First TA, then instructor: If this course has a TA, contact her or him first with your dispute (using the two steps described above). After all, she or he has graded your assignment and therefore knows best how your performance compares to the one of your classmates. However, if your meeting with the TA has not resolved the issue, then you may contact me.

**Academic Misconduct** Students are expected to do their own assigned work. If it is determined that a student has engaged in any form of Academic Dishonesty, he or she may be given an *F* or an *N* for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of *F* or *N* for the entire course. See [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html)

**Sexual Harassment** University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the University Policy Statement (<http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.html>). This is a serious offense, and I feel strongly about addressing it. Complaints about sexual harassment should be reported to the University Office of Equal Opportunity, 274 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street SE, by calling (612) 624-9547 or emailing [eoaa@umn.edu](mailto:eoaa@umn.edu). However, I also want you to know that you can also talk to me as well about any issues that come up.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** Participants with special needs are strongly encouraged to talk to me as soon as possible to gain maximum access to course information. It is important to me that everyone who wants to take this class is not prevented from doing so due to special needs. University policy is to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations

to students who have documented disability conditions (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services and their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. Disability Services is located in Suite 180 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street. Staff can be reached at <http://ds.umn.edu> or by calling (612) 626-1333 (voice or TTY).

One caveat, though: If you have any concerns regarding how special needs might affect the assessment of your performance, you have to talk to me *prior* to the date of the assessment. I cannot make grade adjustments after the fact.

**Statement regarding diversity** I strongly believe that diversity is an asset rather than a liability. For one, in a globalized world you will be exposed to people who are different from you. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that people who are different in almost all cases bring something valuable to the table: Experiences that you can learn from, insights that were not apparent to you, skills that you do not have, or knowledge that you can benefit from. It is my intention to create a learning environment in this class that allows everyone to share their unique strengths. This is not only my personal belief. After all, research shows that the best work is usually produced by groups that combine the different comparative advantages of their group members.

I therefore emphasize that I will welcome anyone to my class, regardless of your sexual orientation, religious observances, political orientation, physical characteristics, cultural background, nationality, or any other characteristic. I recognize that I myself am not perfect, but I promise you to make every effort. If you have any concerns with respect to your acceptance in the classroom I strongly encourage you to talk with me.

**Technology in the classroom** Laptops are allowed and even encouraged in the classroom. Bring yours to classes, as we will frequently use it for group activities and short in-class writing assignments. However, I do expect you to use the laptop for activities related to the class only. That is, no gaming, no facebook, no emails, no chatting. I reserve the right to administer sanctions if your behavior does not align with these expectations.

However, any other technological items such as cell phones, Ipods, MP3 players, pagers, and PDAs need to be turned OFF during class. That's right: turn it off, rather than just setting it to vibrate. The purpose for this policy is that I want to minimize distractions during class. I do want you to be focused on the learning activities that will be going on. If I notice that you are not paying attention but instead are focused on your cell phone I reserve the right to do something about it.

Further, you are not allowed to make video- or audio-recordings of the classes without my prior permission. I reserve the right to legal action in case I observe you doing so. The reason why the dialogue between professors and students should stay within the closed community of the classroom is simple. After all, academic freedom and completely honest communication in the classroom requires a certain degree of privacy for all the people in the classroom. Students and teachers alike need to be able to be frank, and they need to express their emotions honestly. A video- or audio recording will seriously impede the willingness of students to come forward and engage in an open and honest discussion.

## Communication

- **E-mail:** E-mail is the most reliable way to get in touch with me outside of class and office hours. While I may sometimes be able to return e-mail more quickly, in general you should expect a response within 48 hours.

On a more general note, here are some tips for e-mail success (and requirements for success on the job later on):

- Provide a useful and descriptive subject line (ex: Question about my thesis for Essay 1)

- Begin with a greeting (ex: "Dear Prof. Bunte") and end with a signature (ex: "Sincerely, Student"). Launching straight into the message is bad, but "Hi!" is poor form and "Hey Prof!" is an unmitigated disaster. "Dear" and "Hi" are fine, so long as you follow both by a name or title: "Hi Professor" or "Hi Mr. Bunte".
  - Be clear and concise. Write short messages, make clear requests, get to your point rapidly, and offer to provide more information rather than launch into your life story.
  - Check to see whether your question is already answered in the syllabus or other course materials before sending an e-mail. Also, don't ask for information before you've looked on Google. "Can you send me paper X?" is annoying.
  - Use your official school email address. The email address from high school like "hotmuffin92@hotmail.com" and "mikeyg@gmail.com" are just not appropriate.
  - Form: Capitalize and punctuate.
- Phone: I will not hand out my home land-line or cell phone. I have an office phone, an e-mail address, and office hours (See the top of this document) if you need to talk with me.
  - Office Hours: I will hold regular office hours (see the top of this document). I am committed to being available to you for questions and concerns. However, in return, I ask you to observe some simple guidelines:
    - If you make an appointment to see me at my office, be on time. If you are late and I do not have to be there, I will leave. Do not show up for office hour appointments with me if you are drunk, stoned, or hung-over
    - If during an appointment, you take out a cell phone and take or make a call, I will ask you to leave. I regard that as rude.
    - If you come to see me at my office and another student is already speaking to me, do not enter my office or stand in the doorway. Please go around the corner and wait your turn. Every student deserves privacy when discussing class issues with me.

**Statement on classroom conduct / general etiquette guidelines** The following suggestions embody some general guidelines of courtesy that I strongly recommend.

- Do not carry on side discussions while someone else is speaking.
- Do not begin gathering or packing your belongings until class is dismissed.
- Learn my name and the Teaching Assistants' names. I have met students who after a term in my class could not name me. As Shania Twain states, that does not impress me much. You should want to know your profs, and you should want them to know you, especially if you will require reference letters from them to go on to graduate school, a professional college, or to get a job.
- The Teaching Assistants and I are happy to help you. But remember that we are not your servants. You are my student, not my client.
- Please do not tell me that you need an *A* in my class to get into law school/teachers college or to remain in the dorms or on a University sports team. As I have laid out above, such things are not part of my formal evaluation process. I can grade only the quality of work that you give to me.
- Please do not tell me that you are getting *As* in your other classes if you are not doing as well in my class as you would like. I do not grade your other course work.

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